

1. Describe the practice proposed for recognition, and list its objectives. Detail how the practice is innovative, how it promotes high student achievement and how it can be replicated. (Maximum of 50 lines) 358

This district's innovative and comprehensive **"Super Saturdays"** enrichment program for all interested students in grades 3 through 12 (including non-public school students who live within the municipality) was initiated during the 1997-98 school year. Students enrolled in Special Education and Limited English Proficient classes are welcome and encouraged to participate. The program is aligned and integrated with, as well as expands and enriches, the district's curriculum offerings. **"Super Saturdays"** facilitates a broad spectrum of specialized non-credit courses in subject areas, academic disciplines, and areas of student interest that are not part of the daily school curriculum. Courses are ten weeks in length. The program is held for the 10-week period from mid-January through late March so as to provide a stimulating learning experience prior to district, state, and SAT testing dates. **"Super Saturdays"** nurtures the concept that students will be actively involved in challenging experiences in a multiplicity of ways. The program provides an opportunity for young people to explore academic, artistic and imaginative interests in a creative environment that encourages and hopes to stimulate further development of a lifelong love of learning. Authentic student assessment, based on performance and/or exhibition, offers a true sense of pride and accomplishment. **Program objectives** are broad based and encompass:

1. developing students' enthusiasm for learning and social maturity leading to success in their academic and personal lives;
2. developing students' eagerness to explore their world and their role within that world by expanding horizons to investigate new learnings;
3. providing a positive, supportive and encouraging learning environment that helps students develop the self-confidence, self-esteem and independence needed to succeed in any academic or non-academic pursuit;
4. encouraging students to pursue new friendships and, through networking, develop a respect for different cultures, ideas, and beliefs.

During **"Super Saturdays"** premiere season, over 80 courses (60+ different course titles) were offered. This year, the program has expanded to 140 courses (96 different course titles). Courses offered for students in grades 3 through 8 include *"African Dance and Music"*, *"Aquatic Know-How"*, *"Broadway Bound"*, *"Celebrating the Earth...Handle with Care"*, *"Conversational Filipino"*, *"Explorando Español"*, *"French for Fun"*, *"Funtastic Chemistry"*, *"Famous Trials through the Ages"*, *"It's Magic!"*, *"Maskmaking"*, *"Watercolor and Drawing"*, *"Web Site Design"*, *"Hand Papermaking"*, *"Quilting as a Form of Storytelling"*, *"Sign Language"*, *"Cartooning"*, *"Craftmania"*, *"Exploring Family History through Personal Photographs"*, *"Computers, Kid, and Parents: Special Projects – Working Together"*, *"Introduction to Acting: Technique and Scene Study"*, *"Science in a Bag"*, *"Writing Can Be Fun!"* and *"Healthful Health and Physical Well-Being"*. For high school participants in grades 9-12, courses include *"Princeton Review SAT Prep"* (a \$750.00 retail value!), *"Trial Advocacy"*, *"Effective Public Speaking"*, *"Without a Vision, My People Perish"*, *"Professional Clay Animation"*, *"Pottery and Ceramics"*, *"Internet Resources for Young People"*, *"Modern Dance and Movement"*. Additionally, **"Super Saturdays"** includes a host of courses whereby students can strengthen their academic skills and increase their test-taking performance. ESPA Prep, MAT 7 Prep, GEPA Prep, HSPT Prep in language arts and math as well as *Advanced Placement Subject Review* courses are offered.

"Super Saturdays" operates at five geographically located district sites, with the ability to expand to additional sites based on increased student registration. All facilities, equipment and physical resources in 4 elementary schools (for grade 3 through 8 participants) and state-of-the art 1 high school site (9-12) are available for the program's endeavors. Courses are scheduled on Saturday mornings from 9:00am to 12:00 noon. Students participate in two different ninety-minute courses for ten sessions. During the premiere season (1997-98), more than 2000 students participated!

This practice is innovative because: (1) **"Super Saturdays"** extends the opportunity for increasing student achievement beyond the traditional school day and week; (2) offers quality enrichment courses in which all children excel to high levels; (3) it occurs in a large urban district which embraces a large minority population and 55 different language groups; and, (4) ALL students who register ARE ACCEPTED. The best thing about **"Super Saturdays"** is that it is **absolutely FREE** to all students! There is no cost involved - classes, materials, supplies, field trips, etc. are all included. Similar programs in other districts traditionally charge a per course fee. Moreover, candidates from diverse sources are solicited to teach/facilitate the courses. District-employed certified teachers and teacher assistants are primary candidates. Additionally, through newspaper ads, teachers from other districts, experts, artists, business professionals, senior citizens, college students and community members with special talents and expertise apply and are interviewed for employment. All instructors are paid according to the contract stipulated rate. Furthermore, parents and community members have been active and volunteer at the sites and assist with clerical tasks, registration, and as assistants to course instructors. **"Super Saturdays"** was a winner of the "Thirteenth Annual School Leader Award" sponsored by the New Jersey School Boards Association. The district was recognized for improving student learning by offering a "unique and innovative educational program".

The practice promotes high student achievement because: (1) special programs that occur outside traditional school typically provide a level of challenge and a pace of learning that is more suitable to the intellectual capabilities of students and very different from what they encounter in school; (2) there are more opportunities for independent inquiry, in-depth study, and accelerated learning; (3) numerous and wide-ranging courses are offered encouraging students to "take a risk"....learn a new skill or gain additional knowledge... by trying something they've never done while having fun!; and, (4) students choose to participate, thereby fostering interest, willingness, curiosity, and an authentic eagerness to learn.

Replication of the "Super Saturdays" program requires a focused effort related to the development and initiation of an organized, interesting, exciting program with stimulating, fun courses. The commitment for sufficient funding is paramount if the program is to be "free" for participants. Successful implementation requires sufficient design and planning time so effective publicity, interviews, and student registration can be done. Extensive program documentation is available for distribution to other districts interested in initiating a similar program.

2. Describe the educational needs of students that the practice addresses and how they were identified. List the **Core Curriculum Content and/or Cross-Content Workplace Readiness Standards** addressed by the practice and describe how the practice addresses the standard(s). (Maximum 50 lines)

The **educational needs of students that are addressed** by "Super Saturdays" is embodied in the ultimate goal of education – to develop an educated citizenry to carry forward the tenets of our society. As we fast approach a new millennium, we are living in an age of knowledge and rapid change. Because all students presently enrolled in schools will be employed through the middle of the 21st century, their preparation for their world of work needs to be rooted in possessing advanced levels of knowledge and skill. Technology is burgeoning, information exchange is ever-increasing, and instantaneous worldwide communication is universal. The changes which are taking place in our society have increased the demand for internationally competitive workers thereby challenging schools to provide educational opportunities and experiences to meet that demand. To that end, schools need to produce excellent thinkers and excellent doers. It is with this goal that "Super Saturdays" was created, designed, and implemented. All students, including inner-city students, many of whom are minority and/or limited English proficient, need to luxuriate in high quality, challengingly excellent educational opportunities from many enrichment domains, as do their counterparts from more affluent educational situations. The "Super Saturdays" program holds the expectation that all students from this large urban district maximize their potential by exploring new areas...new learnings...new endeavors...by taking an educational "risk" and attempting something totally new and different...by participating in "Super Saturdays" courses which are FREE! The "Super Saturdays" course offerings booklet, with over 140 courses listed, is a blueprint for excellence in that it assists students in expanding their horizons to investigate new learning experiences.

"Super Saturdays" nurtures the concept that students will be actively engaged in challenging experiences in a multiplicity of ways. This directly relates to, and addresses, the expectations of **ALL** of the NJ Core Curriculum Content Standards including the Cross-Content Workplace Readiness Standards. The optimum goal of both is to encourage students to become lifelong learners! "Super Saturdays" parallels the implementation of the NJCCCS in that the "Super Saturdays" program "is intended for virtually all students - college-bound, career-bound, academically talented, those whose native language is not English, those with disabilities, students with learning deficits, and students from diverse socioeconomic (disadvantages and advantaged) backgrounds" (NJCCCS, p. v).

"Super Saturdays" embodies high expectations for students, including those integral to success beyond the formal learning environment--in the real world, throughout their lives. "Super Saturdays" actualizes all five Cross Content Workplace Readiness Standards:

- Standard #1: All students will develop career planning and workplace readiness.
- Standard #2: All students will use information, technology, and other tools.
- Standard #3: All students will use critical thinking, decision-making, and problem-solving skills.
- Standard #4: All students will demonstrate self-management skills.
- Standard #5: All students will apply safety principles.

The Cumulative Progress Indicators associated with each Workplace Readiness Standard are the foundation of "Super Saturdays" and integrated seamlessly throughout courses and the teaching and learning process in activities, resources, projects, themes, etc.

"Super Saturdays" strategies seek to accomplish authentic learning and achieve the expectations of student performance set by the **Core Curriculum Content Standards** in the Visual and Performing Arts, Health/Physical Education, Language Arts Literacy, Mathematical, Science, Social Studies, and World Languages. "Super Saturdays" courses reflect the most innovative topics coupled with the newest and best methodologies, strategies, activities, etc. When the program was developed, and throughout the two years of program implementation, integrated, interdisciplinary processes are highlighted so as to characterize the connections to the NJCCCS. Prospective course offerings, accompanied by specialized course descriptions, were generated as a sampling of the types of courses projected to be offered by the program. The courses originated and are categorized by the areas prescribed by the NJCCCS content area and/or NJCCWR standards. Every standard in each of the listed areas is addressed proficiently, and in distinguished and verifiable fashion, throughout the "Super Saturdays" program courses. The NJCCCS listed below summarize those meaningfully and authentically addressed by "Super Saturdays".

Visual and Performing Arts:	Standards 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4, 1.5, 1.6
Health and Physical Education:	Standards 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 2.4, 2.5, 2.6
Language Arts Literacy:	Standards 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.4, 3.5
Mathematics	Standards 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 4.4, 4.5, 4.6, 4.7, 4.8, 4.9, 4.10, 4.11, 4.12, 4.13, 4.14, 4.15, 4.16
Science	Standards 5.1, 5.2, 5.3, 5.4, 5.5, 5.6, 5.7, 5.8, 5.9, 5.10, 5.11, 5.12
Social Studies	Standards 6.1, 6.2, 6.3, 6.4, 6.5, 6.6, 6.7, 6.8, 6.9
World Languages	Standards 7.1, 7.2

"Super Saturdays" is a program for students in grades 3-12, whereby they participate in multi-level grade groupings depending on the course in which they are enrolled. Therefore, the Cumulative Progress Indicators for grades 4, 8, and 12 for each standard are incorporated in all courses. Moreover, the development of accelerated and enriched specialized instruction and authentic student learning experiences fulfill many of the CPIs established for Grade 12 student achievement level...at the 6,7,8th grade levels and, where possible, even at the 4, 5 grade level. "Super Saturdays" attempts to provide students with the opportunity to choose to experience new things at the highest level of enjoyment, satisfaction, distinction...where the rewards are glorious! Students are involved in making magical memories that are part of them forever!

3. **Document the assessment measures used to determine the extent to which the objectives of the practice have been met. (Maximum 60 lines)**

The **"Super Saturdays"** program has documented assessment measures for meeting its objectives. **Assessment measures** used to evaluate **"Super Saturdays"**, to the extent to which the objectives of the practice have been met, are multi-dimensional and ongoing. Assessment occurs at the student, instructor, parent, and administrative levels. Additionally, course and program assessment occurs. Assessment is integral to **"Super Saturdays"** for the purpose of evaluation, whereby evaluation is the process of determining value and/or effectiveness for the purpose of decision-making and future planning. The primary purposes for evaluation of **"Super Saturdays"** are: (1) overall curriculum/course planning and improvement; (2) detecting the need for program adjustment; (3) allocating resources (time, staff, money, facilities); and (4) ascertaining overall program effectiveness in achieving objectives.

For students, the emphasis is on student performance and performance-based assessment. In **"Super Saturdays"** courses, students engage in "authentic" problem-solving tasks requiring them to think, plan, analyze, integrate, construct, and evaluate critical questions and problem-solving situations. Performance is criteria-based and cumulative over the course of the 10 weeks. Upon completion of a course, students "final assessment" is related to a project, performance, product, piece of constructed art, or a level of skill proficiency depending on the unique nature of the course and the authentic performance tasks prescribed by the course outline. Additionally, all participating students complete a brief "Course Evaluation Form" which is scannable.

At the course and instructor level, instructors are observed in the classroom setting. Skill, style and performance related to the course topic is noted. The observation of instructors is critical so as to maintain the highest caliber of classroom instruction and student interest. Since participation of the students is voluntary and courses are free, it is the skill and instructional style, in addition to the course content, that keeps students coming back week after week. Additionally, all instructors complete a brief "Course Evaluation Form" which is scannable. The purpose is to elicit data as to course relevancy, student participation and overall learning. Evaluations are used for the purpose of program adjustment, improvement, and expansion.

Expansion of the **"Super Saturdays"** program is anticipated and encouraged. The district is prepared to service ALL interested students at additional sites. Procedures are in place where prospective course instructors may submit proposed courses for consideration as possible future **"Super Saturdays"** course offerings.

A "Final Evaluation Report" is submitted to the Superintendent at the conclusion of the **"Super Saturdays"** season. This compilation provides documentation regarding the effectiveness of the overall program and assists in making decisions regarding the program's future. The following data is from the 1997-1998 **"Super Saturdays"** final report.

Over 2000 students from 36 different district schools (elementary and high) participated.

Site	No. of Students	No. Courses offered at Site
1 (ELEM)	691	27
2 (ELEM)	725	26
3 (ELEM)	213	14
4 (ELEM)	175	12
5 (HS)	235	13

Over 1800 student evaluation forms were submitted. Ninety-two percent (92%) of students rated the program as "Excellent" or "Good" with 80% of students attending more than 8 sessions. Eighty percent (80%) of students enjoyed the course content and class activities with 19% most enjoying the course instructors. Ninety-one percent (91%) of student rated the instructors as "Excellent" or "Good". Seventy-two (72%) of participating students "were interested in learning something new" and 18% were "excited or attracted by the program offerings". Sixty-one percent (61%) participated in the free breakfast program. Ninety-four percent (94%) of participating students would "attend 'Super Saturdays' the next time the program was offered".

Moreover, parents complete and return a "Program Evaluation Form". Parent evaluation forms revealed: 24% percent of participants were enrolled in Special Education, Bilingual and ESL classes during the week. Ninety-eight percent (98%) of parents rated the **"Super Saturdays"** as "Excellent" and "Good". Ninety-nine percent (99%) of parents rated **"Super Saturdays"** as "Excellent" or "Good". Ninety-six percent (96%) of parents rated the variety of courses offered as "Excellent" or "Good". Ninety-six percent (96%) rated the instructors as "Excellent" or "Good". One hundred percent (100%) felt "Enthusiastic" and "Very Enthusiastic" about their child(ren) participating in the program. One hundred percent felt that the **"Super Saturdays"** program "should be offered again" and their child(ren) "would attend 'Super Saturdays' the next time the program was offered".

Comments on evaluation forms of Head Teachers and Course Instructors included: "Offered a wide range of courses that were interesting to students.", "Sites were staffed according to student registrations.", "Provided meaningful activity for students on Saturdays.", "Provided a safe haven for students on Saturday mornings.", "Provided students with another connection to what was occurring in their classrooms daily.", "Served over 11,000 breakfasts at the 5 sites over 10 weeks.", "Was a success because of the hard work and ownership of the people involved as well as the preparation and planning prior to the start of the program."

"Super Saturdays" is truly a **"Super-ior"** experience for students and has extended opportunities for student achievement beyond the school day by providing numerous, high-quality enrichment courses at no cost to the students and their parents!